



Greening and Sustainability of Sports

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This is the seventh of a seven part series of articles on sports management by Brian Naicker, Programme Leader of the FIFA-CIES Programme in Sport Management, a programme designed by Centre Internationale du Sport in conjunction with FIFA. FIFA-CIES has a collaboration agreement with UNISA to provide the tuition for this programme. In addition to heading up the Programme, Brian is also the Head of UNISA Centre for Business Management (CBM).

successful operation and stay profitable. This is especially relevant in the case of professional sports.

Embracing models

The professional sports community has certainly recognised this impact but has yet to formulate and embrace environmentally sustainable models.

Local examples of these include the environmental impact assessments, which are becoming a prerequisite for many golf estate developments, etc. The relatively slow uptake on these initiatives within professional sports requires sizeable investments with many clubs and teams in a precarious fiscal position to do so.

There is a general perception in the industry that there is very little investment going on in the "back office" of major professional sports. Most of the money changes hands and is invested in the player and with front end interface eg. Ticketing etc.

Maintenance

The upkeep and general maintenance of stadia and arenas is done through low level pay. Community sports rely heavily on local councils and municipalities for the upkeep and maintenance of sporting venues.

The overall debate at the moment centers on the responsibilities and roles of the various stakeholders within sport eg. the team, the organization, the players, the fans etc. The questions being asked revolves around what should be done and by whom in terms of achieving sustainability within sports. Increasingly, we are seeing a combination of efforts taking place.

Doing your bit

Some professional sports are building a small levy into ticket prices to take care of environmental issues. Others offer recycling points for dedicated litter within various spots in a sporting venue. Imagine the carbon footprint of all the games taking place at this year soccer world cup in South Africa? The fan is generally regarded as the biggest contributor of such carbon footprint. Someone has to offset this and very often, this cost is borne by public entities and private providers.

Lead by example

According to MacIntosh (2009), there are two excellent examples of teams and stadia that have embraced these environmentally sustainable principles. The Philips Arena features carpeting made of recycled materials, compact-fluorescent lamps, and stringent water conservation measures. The revamped American Airlines Arena has energy-efficient underground parking, water-conserving toilets, and carpeting designed to hold dirt and hence increase air quality.

No matter what colour jersey your favorite team wears, there's one colour that every sports fan can and should root for: Green! ■

If you have followed the previous six articles in this series, you would have realised that sport is in fact a big business. When one attends these games or watches from the comfort of their couch for that matter, one may be forgiven for thinking that sport is harmless to the environment and not much consideration is paid to the impact sport has on the environment. However there should be no doubt that many sports face the same environmental and sustainability challenges currently faced by many other sectors within the economy.

Green

The greening and sustainability of sports is affecting all codes on a global scale. The practice of sports and its impact on the environment is the subject of great attention and concern. If one looks at the new provisions for the Formula 1 – 2010 race season, it is noticeable that sustainability is of critical importance within the sport of motor racing.

We may argue that no sporting code or team is similar. But there are commonalities in terms of their energy use, waste management, water consumption, pesticide use, land use, transportation, carbon emissions etc (Mark McIntosh, 2009). Sport has been increasingly bombarded with a host of environmental regulations as well as increased pressure from consumers. At the same time, they need to ensure a